

of. First Euchar 1969

Call to Worship
Gospel: Luke 24: 1-11
Epistle: 1 Cor. 1: 1-3, 11-14, 27-31

Prayer 27: 3-10

Prayer
Prayer
Prayer
Prayer

Church Sunday 9:30

Hymn 223

Gospel
Prayer & Lord's Prayer
Hymn 141
Benediction
Postlude

Judas - The Traitor

Text:

During Lent we generally hear and read mostly about Jesus. This is only natural since the season of Lent is supposed to make us aware of the suffering and death which He endured. But there is one character who played a very important role in the events leading up to Christ's death. The man is Judas. We touched upon him briefly not too long ago, but we didn't look at him too closely. When we read the story of Judas as it is written in the Gospel it is broken up and does not leave too much of an impression on us. But if we take and put it all together and read it, the story becomes more like a story.

The first thing that we read about Judas concerning his betrayal of Jesus is the episode of his bargaining with the chief priests. The Gospel of John points out one thing that is not included in the other Gospels. If you recall at one point during the final day of Jesus, He was in a house in Bethany and a woman anointed His head with an expensive perfume; John tells the story that Judas questioned why this perfume wasn't sold and the money given to the poor. Then he said that Judas did this not because he was concerned for the poor, but because he was a thief. Judas was the treasurer of the disciples and John adds that he had been taking money from the treasury. This argument has never been proved or disproved one way or the other. The one reason that it is not accepted too much, is the fact that many things in John's Gospel are thought to be merely his interpretations given in his style to point up what he is trying to make others believe. But nevertheless the chief priests were very eager to accept the chance to have Jesus turned over to them. They had been looking for a way to seize Jesus without arousing the anger of his disciples or his followers and this was just what they wanted. The agreed on price of thirty pieces of silver was the price the Law had fixed as the price for a slave's life. It was thirty shekels and not thirty Denarii as is so often said. The price that Judas received was approximately \$10.00 since the value of a shekel was

approximately 64%.

There are three reasons of thought as to why Judas betrayed Jesus. The first is greed. But this is thought to be rather unlikely by most scholars due to the fact that the gain was so little. If it is true that Judas did this strictly for money, then this is the most terrible example of what a man will do for money. The second reason is hatred. Judas may have betrayed Jesus because he thought that Jesus was going to be the leader of the rebellion against the Romans and when instead He remained quiet and loving toward all people, then Judas became disillusioned and began to hate Jesus and for this betrayed Him. Then the third reason is that Judas wanted to force the hands of Jesus to reveal Himself as the real Messiah. The consensus of opinion is that Judas never really intended for Jesus to die, and He thought instead of letting himself be arrested Jesus would fight back. Most Biblical scholars believe that this is the most logical answer as to why Judas betrayed Jesus.

The next scene of the story we find the disciples and Jesus eating. Then Jesus makes the declaration that one of them would betray Him, they are dumbfounded and want to know who it is. This proves that the deal that Judas made had been done in secrecy. For had it been done with the knowledge of the other eleven, the chance of his being killed by them would have been very good.

Then we come to the kiss of betrayal. This is the strange part of the whole story. Why was there a need to kiss Jesus to identify Him? These people knew Him. They had seen Him in the temple only the Sunday before, when He drove the money changers out. But here again the thought is that Judas believed that Jesus would resist with violence when they tried to seize Him and Judas was merely trying to speed the process up. However his scheme backfired and Judas was a very disillusioned man.

The final act of the story is the suicide of Judas. We are told that Judas repented and brought back the money to return it. Now here is where Matthew tells one of his little touches to the event. All through the Gospel of Matthew you can find there being a reference to a prophecy of the Old Testament.

trying to prove that Jesus was the Messiah. In the first place most of these quotations were taken out of context and did not apply to Jesus at all. And in the second place he is very often mistaken where the quotations come from. But we must realize that the Jews were willing to die to try to accept Jesus as the Messiah and he felt it right to let them do so. He gave them the opportunity to do so. He told them to do so. The Jews were not led by Him, which he attributed to their hardness of heart. But in the final portion of the betrayal story we see that Judas was troubled and became affected by the love and compassion of Jesus. He was not a disciple.

Many people who read this story are very quick to say that if they had been Jews they would have never betrayed Jesus. But the thing that we must not forget, is the fact that when they were told to go to the temple, or the house where they should go, that we try to make them go the way would like them to go. It is very easy to tell them to go and they would do it. But this is certain. Judas was a Jew and he was living 2000 years ago, and it is so easy to tell him to go to the temple. He was a Jew and he was living 2000 years ago.

Think of the time we have each betrayed Him. We betray Him every time we refuse or neglect to do what we should do as Christians. We betray Him every time we show hatred instead of love to another person. We betray Him whenever we forget the sacrifice He made for us and we take it for granted.

There is one other lesson that this story of Judas gives. And this is the fact that once we have done certain things, we cannot undo them. Judas was unable to undo the wrong that he did to Jesus and because of this he ended his life. All of us can look back in our lives and find something that we have done, some sin or some wrong that we have done to someone, and we can say probably Judas did, "If I could only do that over again." If I only had that time to live over again. But the sad thing of life is that we only have most opportunities once. The occasion to do the right thing only comes once. We can't turn the hands of the clock back, no matter how much we would like to. Omar Khayyam the Persian poet wrote in the Rubaiyat the following poem.

The moving finger writes: and having writ, moves on; nor all your piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

The very fact that we cannot undo what we have done many times, should make us that much more careful that what we do and say are the proper thing to do and say. None of us should ever condemn Judas for what he did. Because the simple truth is that we are all Judas' and we remain that way unless we are able to come to Christ and let Him lead our lives. If we recall the passion story of Jesus we find that at the time of His trial all of the disciples had deserted Him. Did this make them any better than Judas? Of course it didn't, but they probably all hated Judas for what he had done, and they probably all felt that they would never have done it either. But what they did amounted to the same thing. So your human nature is the same today as it was back in the days of Jesus. You and I are exactly the same as Judas and the disciples. We have the same feelings, the same desires, and the same motivations. And if we are given the same set of circumstances, we would most likely do exactly as they. So it does no good whatever for us to stand back and to say that we would not have done that. What each of us needs to do is to come to Christ and lean on Him for our strength. There is a hymn that goes, "I heard the voice of Jesus say Come unto Me and rest; Lay down thou weary one lay down thy head upon my breast. I came to Jesus as I was, weary and worn and sad; I found in Him a resting place and He has made me glad. I heard the voice of Jesus say, "Behold I freely give, the living water freely one, stoop down and drink and live." I came to Jesus and I drank of that life giving stream; my thirst was quenched, my soul revived and now I live in Him. Let us pray.